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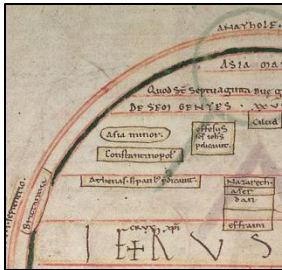


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The Noachide Dispersion in English *Mappae Mundi* c. 960 – c. 1130

By Marcia Kupfer, Independent Scholar

How did medieval inhabitants of the British Isles understand their place on the Atlantic fringe of the known world, a place that, from the classical Roman perspective, put them outside the civilized order?¹ Exploring texts, maps, and pictorial art through the lens of cultural geography, historians have delineated various responses to the challenge of remoteness and insularity. Three mutually compatible solutions stand out. First and foremost are compensatory strategies of spiritual and ecclesial incorporation. Thomas O’Loughlin, Jennifer O’Reilly and Diarmuid Scully, for example, explicate Adomnán’s and Bede’s concern to integrate their respective communities into God’s unfolding plan for humanity.² Membership in Christendom, under the aegis of the Roman church, voided the extreme spatial and temporal remove from the

¹ I am especially grateful to Martin Foys whose question during a discussion at Leeds 2011 prompted this study, and to Diarmuid Scully and Faith Wallis for their comments on an earlier draft. Ideas elaborated here were first sketched out for a piece on a different topic, “The Jerusalem Effect: Rethinking the Centre in Medieval World Maps,” in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, ed. Bianca Kühnel with G. Noga-Banai and H. Vorholt (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming 2014). Some overlap has proved unavoidable.

² Thomas O’Loughlin, “The view from Iona: Adomnán’s Mental Maps,” *Peritia* 10 (1996), pp. 98–122; Jennifer O’Reilly, “Islands and Idols at the Ends of the Earth: Exegesis and Conversion in Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*,” in *Bède le vénérable. Entre tradition et postérité*, ed. Stéphane Lebecq, Michel Perrin, and Olivier Szerwiniack (Lille: Université Charles de Gaulle, 2005), pp. 119–145; Jennifer O’Reilly, “Bede on Seeing the God of Gods in Zion,” in *Text, Image and Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed. Alistair Minnis and Jane Roberts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 3–29; Jennifer O’Reilly, “The Multitude of Isles and the Corner-Stone: Topography, Exegesis, and the Identity of the Angli in Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*,” in *Anglo-Saxon Traces*, ed. Jane Roberts and Leslie Webster (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2011), pp. 201–227; Diarmuid Scully, “Location and Occupation: Bede, Gildas and the Roman Vision of Britain” in *Anglo-Saxon Traces*, 2011, pp. 243–272.

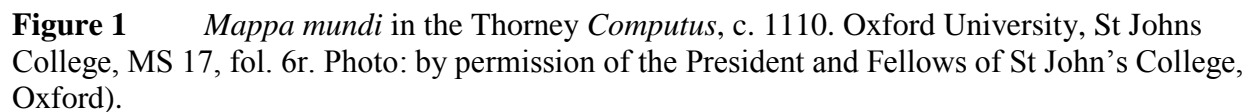
scriptural wellspring of grace and election in the Holy Land. Patrick Gautier Dalché similarly interprets the production at Iona, perhaps during Adomnán's abbacy, of the earliest detailed *mappa mundi* for which there is now compelling evidence.³ The cartographic representation brought the conversion of the oceanic frontier into relation with the mission of the apostles and early desert saints in the world's interior regions.

This centripetal propensity, albeit foundational, should not be taken for granted. Martin Foys and Kathy Lavezzo have observed ways in which later Anglo-Saxon and English works reclaimed the periphery as a center in its own right.⁴ The hinterland of the frozen north became a zone of spiritual privilege akin to the desert where alienation from human society allowed for closeness to God. Separation from the world conferred an exceptionalism that validated a national identity in tension with the unifying project of *res publica Christiana*. Yet a third dynamic evades the binary of center and periphery. Asa Mittman has considered the artistic ramifications of Britain's location on a continuum with the world's monstrous circumference.⁵ Not only did the "marvels of the east" propagate in manuscript illumination, but liminality—both dangerous and powerfully transformative—energized the very role of ornament. For his part, Nicholas Howe, in framing the Anglo-Saxon predicament, moves elegantly between all three

³ Patrick Gautier Dalché, "Eucher de Lyon, Iona, Bobbio: le destin d'une *mappa mundi* de l'antiquité tardive," *Viator* 41, multilingual issue (2010), pp. 1–22.

⁴ Martin K. Foys, "The Virtual Reality of the Anglo-Saxon *Mappamundi*," *Literature Compass* 1/ 1 (2003): ME 016, 1–17; for an extended discussion, see his *Virtually Anglo-Saxon: Old Media, New Media, and Early Medieval Studies in the Late Age of Print* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007), pp. 110–158; Kathy Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and English Community, 1000–1534* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁵ Asa Mittman, *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England* (New York: Routledge, 2006).



complementary possibilities, magnetic attraction to Christian Rome, investment in the local and the vernacular, and fascination with the distant mirror of radical otherness.⁶

The inquiry at hand develops the “centripetal” argument in a reading of triplet English *mappae mundi*—three nearly identical versions of the same cartographic template—from the late eleventh and early twelfth century. The best-known and most artistically accomplished appears in the deluxe *computus* manuscript of c. 1110 from Thorney Abbey (Oxford, Saint John’s College, MS 17, fol. 6r, hereafter SJ), a digital facsimile of which can be consulted in an Internet resource side-by-side with an extensive scholarly apparatus by Faith Wallis.⁷ **(Figure 1)** A sibling *computus* manuscript of c. 1120 from Peterborough includes a less carefully executed iteration (London, British Library, Harley MS 3667, fol. 8v, hereafter H).⁸ **(Figure 2)** Both compilations derive from, among other sources, an exemplar associated with the computist Byrhtferth of Ramsey Abbey (d. c. 1016), whose famous cosmological diagram lies in close proximity to the map in each book (SJ, fol. 7v; H, fol. 8r). Because the cartographic scheme pushes Jerusalem into the center of the *orbis terrae*, its design is usually attributed to new European engagement with the holy city during the era of the First Crusade.⁹ Wallis

⁶ See in particular Nicholas Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

⁷ Faith Wallis, “2. Computus Related Materials: 16. Mappamundi,” *The Calendar & the Cloister: Oxford, St. John’s College MS 17* (McGill University Library. Digital Collections Program, 2007), <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/ms-17/index.htm>, accessed September 4, 2012. See also the author’s unpublished doctoral dissertation, “Ms Oxford St. John’s College 17: A Mediaeval Manuscript in Its Context” (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1985).

⁸ On the relationship between SJ and H, see Wallis, “2. Computus Related Materials: 19. Taxonomy of Knowledge,” and *eadem*, “Ms Oxford St. John’s College 17,” p. 689.

⁹ Anna Dorothee von den Brincken, “Gyrus und Spera: Relikte griechische Geographie im Weltbild der Frühscholastik,” *Sudhoffs Archiv* 73 (1989), pp. 129–144, esp. 141–144; Anna Dorothee von den Brincken, “Jerusalem on Medieval Mappaemundi: A Site Both Historical and Eschatological” in *The Hereford World Map: Medieval World Maps and their Context*, ed. P. D. A. Harvey (London: British Library, 2006), pp. 362–363; Ingrid Baumgärtner, “Die Wahrnehmung Jerusalems auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten,” in *Jerusalem im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter. Konflikte und Konfliktbewältigung - Vorstellungen und Vergegenwärtigungen*, ed. Dieter Bauer, Klaus Herbers, and Nikolaus Jaspert, vol. 28, Campus Historische Studien (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2001), pp.

acknowledges the maps' alignment with contemporary continental examples that radially link "home" communities at the far west to Jerusalem at center. However, she also notes the strong

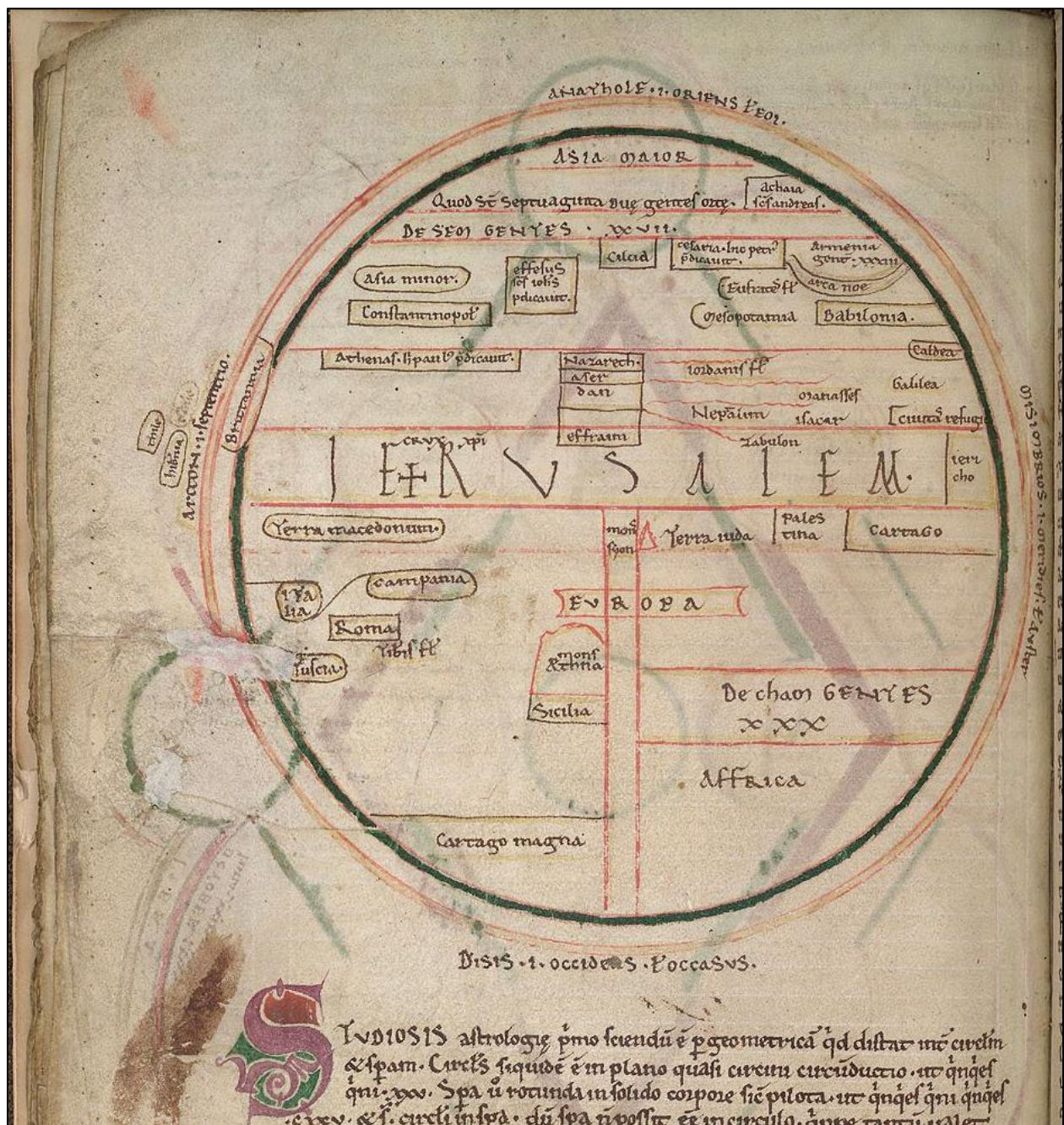


Figure 2 *Mappa mundi* in the Peterborough *Computus*, c. 1120. British Library, Harley MS 3667, fol. 8v. Photo: British Library.

294–296; Ingrid Baumgärtner, “Erzählungen kartieren. Jerusalem in mittelalterlichen Kartenräumen” in *Projektion-Reflexion-Ferne. Räumliche Vorstellungen und Denkfiguren im Mittelalter*, ed. Sonja Glauch, S. Köbele, and U. Störmer-Caysa (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), pp. 199–200.

appeal of such spatial connectivity in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Already at the Synod of Whitby (663/664), in Bede's retelling, his champion Wilfred enlisted universalizing geography on behalf of the drive to orient the Insular liturgical calendar to the Roman date for Easter, the operation at the heart of the *computus*.¹⁰ Thematic and codicological ties between the map and Byrhtferth's Diagram in both SJ and H lead Wallis to posit an origin for the cartographic template at Ramsey.

Martin Foys has introduced yet a third, if unfinished, version into the picture.¹¹ **(Figure 3)** This example (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 265, p. 210, hereafter C) was begun *c.* 1090-1100 on an originally blank page in a Worcester book containing no computistical materials at all. Rather, the map was added to a collection of ecclesiastical extracts traced to the "commonplace book" of Bishop Wulfstan II (1065-95). Evidently, the cartographic template circulated earlier and more widely than previously thought. Comparative analysis of the subtle differences between the three versions in their larger manuscript settings may well illuminate the genealogy of the prototype and the stemma of the copies, matters as yet unresolved. Foys has promised such an investigation. In the meantime, he suggests that the source map initially served a pastoral function and traveled through Worcester to Ramsey, where it was only then incorporated into the scientific framework of the *computus*. Furthermore, he maintains that agreements between the Peterborough and Worcester analogues make Thorney the outlier. Whereas Wallis sees correlations with Byrhtferth materials as integral to the map's original formulation, Foys cautions that the linking components may be additions.

¹⁰ Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 126-128, 158, fleshes out this point.

¹¹ Martin K. Foys, "An Unfinished *Mappa Mundi* from Late-Eleventh-Century Worcester," *Anglo-Saxon England* 35 (2006), pp. 271-284.

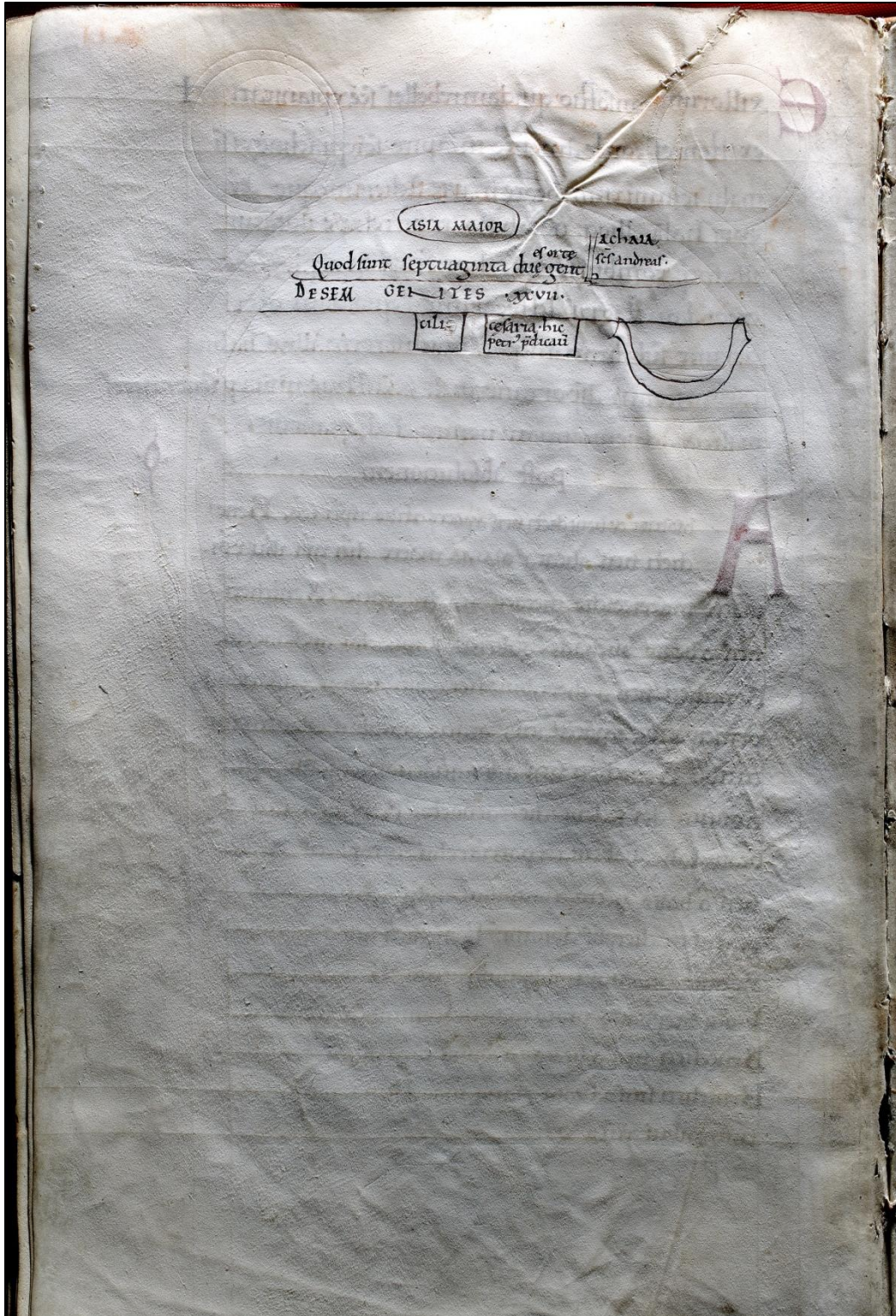


Figure 3 Unfinished *mappa mundi* in Commonplace Book of Bishop Wulfstan II, c. 1100. Cambridge University, Corpus Christi College, MS 265 p. 210. Photo: by permission of the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

Whether the cartographic template is an Anglo-Saxon invention, a product of the First Crusade, or a turn-of-the-century revision of an earlier design, I cannot answer.¹² My purpose is to elucidate the maps' formal organization and programmatic rationale, heretofore misunderstood. In clarifying the logic of the cartographic scheme, I will not so much adjudicate Wallis's and Foys's competing perspectives as triangulate them. Finally, I insert a fourth element into the conversation, an unfinished map of *c.* 1125 that shares the rhetorical conceit, but not the design of the triplets. **(Figure 4)** Its content, attenuated as it is, may shed light on missing elements unique to the Worcester version.

Wallis aptly characterizes the SJ map (and by implication its two analogues) as “a rather exceptional graphic gazetteer constructed of three overlapping lists: . . . provinces of the inhabited world . . . ; nations . . . descended from the three sons of Noah . . . ; and . . . places associated with Biblical and apostolic history.”¹³ It is the idiosyncratic spatialization of the lists that remains to be explained. The triplet maps embed a T-O schema, but refuse its formulaic means of establishing a tripartite *orbis terrarum*. The normative referential armature of the “T,” signifying the aquatic boundaries between the “continents,” is redefined along the horizontal axis and violated along the vertical axis. When at some point during the early Middle Ages the T-O schema for the tripartition of lands was amended to include reference to the Noachide dispersion

¹² I am inclined to date the map as it is found in the form preserved in SJ and H to *c.* 1100 for reasons outlined in my forthcoming article, “The Jerusalem Effect: Rethinking the Centre in Medieval World Maps,” cited in n. 1. This dating is upheld in a brilliant study by Faith Wallis, “*Computus*, Crusade, and Construction: Writing England's Monastic Past and Future in Oxford, St John's College 17” in *Writing England: Books 1100–1200*, eds. Elaine Trehearne and Oriana Da Rold, *New Medieval Literatures* 13 (2011), forthcoming. I am grateful to Professor Wallis for sharing her article with me prior to its publication.

¹³ See above n. 7.

of peoples, the resultant maps typically assigned Europe to Japheth, Asia to Shem, and Africa to

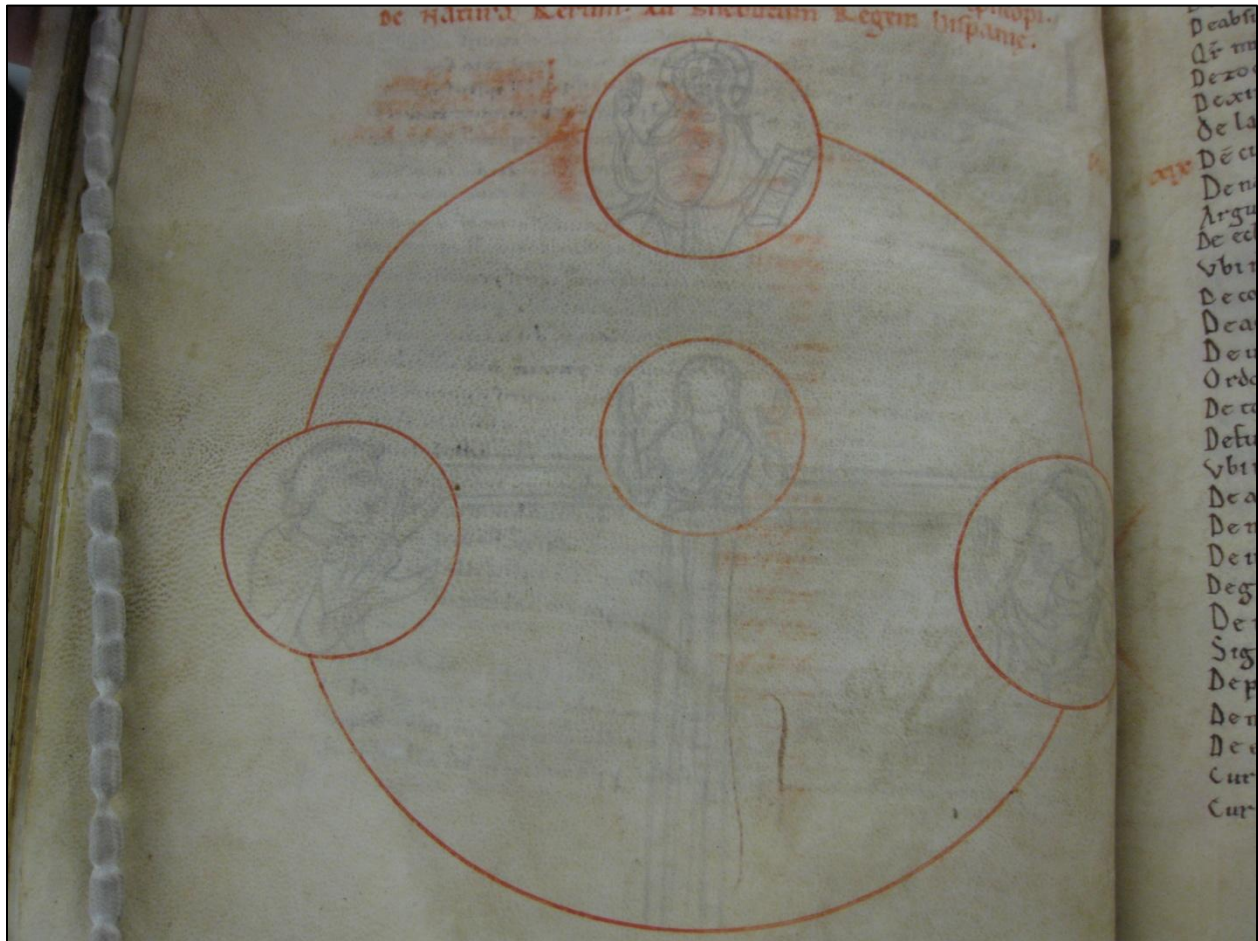


Figure 4 Unfinished *mappa mundi* concluding Isidore's *De natura rerum* in the *Computus* of William of Malmesbury, c. 1120–before 1125. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F. 3. 14., fol. 19v. Photo: Author's, reproduced by permission of The Bodleian Libraries, Oxford University.

Ham.¹⁴ The triplets, however, do not follow through on this score. Then, too, remarks Foys, the location of places “appears quite jumbled.”¹⁵ He and Evelyn Edson address the “muddled

¹⁴ The Noachide addition is sometimes mistakenly attributed to Isidore of Seville (d. 636). See Patrick Gautier Dalché, “L’héritage antique de la cartographie médiévale: les problèmes et les acquis” in *Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Fresh Perspectives, New Methods*, eds. Richard J. A. Talbert and Richard W. Unger (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 29–66, esp. 56–57; Chet Van Duzer and Sandra Sáenz-López Pérez, “*Tres filii Noe dividerunt orbem post diluvium*: the World Map in British Library Add. MS 37049,” *Word & Image* 26/ 1 (2010), pp. 21–39, esp. 32–33; Chet Van Duzer, “A Neglected Type of Medieval *Mappamundi* and Its Re-imaging in the *Mare Historiarum* (BnF MS Lat. 4915, fol. 26v),” *Viator* 43/ 2 (2012), pp. 277–301, esp. 277–282. Van Duzer, “A Neglected Type of Medieval *Mappamundi*,” pp. 278–280, mischaracterizes the V-in-square figure as used to

geography” and “confusion” by picking up Anna Dorothee von den Brincken’s idea that the maps adapt a north-oriented Byzantine model to the conventional true orientation of the Western medieval *mappa mundi*.¹⁶ Yet no evidence supports such a hypothesis, doubtful on its face, given that the minimal, scattered cartographic production extant from the Byzantine realm is altogether unrelated to the *mappa mundi* tradition.¹⁷ I show that the disruption of the T-O schema, the representation of the Noachide dispersion, and the arrangement of places go hand in hand, the whole homing closely to exegetical topoi rooted in Latin etymological gloss.

Within the imbricated lists enumerated by Wallis, the treatment of Jerusalem is especially salient. *HIERUSALEM* (without the *H* in the Peterborough version) boldly stretches across most of the horizontal bar of the “T;” the title is centered in SJ, but not quite in H, where it is roughly double the width. A miniscule *crux xpi* is written in superscript between the second and third letters, and a cross is drawn between the *E* and *R*; in SJ a second, partially encircled cross

diagram the Noachide dispersion in copies of Isidore’s *Etymologiae* (Book 14), where it is almost always juxtaposed with a T-O map. The V-in-square figure does *not* correlate Noah’s sons with the world’s *partes*, which are nowhere included: the name Shem written inside the “V” cannot be said to “indicate” Asia, nor Japheth at left Europe, nor Ham at right Africa. Rather, the V-in-square functions precisely to offer an *alternative* to the tripartition of the T-O; the former epitomizes the distribution of peoples according to passages in *Etym.* 9.2, esp. lines 9, 25, and 37, which depend on Jerome, *Hebraicae Quaestiones in libro Geneseos*, 10.2–22. Early exegetical tradition hesitated too rigidly to align Noachide inheritance with the geographic division of lands. For example, Bede in *Hexaemeron*, 3.10.1–2: “the first-born Shem obtained Asia, the second son Ham Africa and the last-born son Japheth Europe—at any rate with the proviso that, since Asia is greater by far in the geographical area of its lands than either Europe or Libya, the descendants of Ham and Japheth also possessed some portions of Asia,” quoted from *On Genesis*, trans. Calvin B. Kendall, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), p. 215, see also 22–27. To read the V-in-square “by analogy” (278) with the T-O is thus to miss their *complementarity*—the two spatializing figures are based on different premises, both equally valid to the medieval editor(s) who interpolated them into Isidore’s text. Van Duzer finds “confusing” the “curious arrangement of the cardinal directions” around the V-in-square figure in *Etymologiae* manuscripts (279). Fair enough; however, the disposition—three directions instead of four, with east at top, south at right, and west at left instead of at bottom—cannot be dismissed as “a strange error” (293, fig. 2). What is needed is an explanation for the why the west substitutes for the north, which is elided.

¹⁵ Foys, “An Unfinished *Mappa Mundi*,” p. 274, 275, 282 (quote, 275).

¹⁶ von den Brincken, “Gyrus und Spera,” pp. 141–144; Foys, “An Unfinished *Mappa Mundi*,” pp. 276–277 and n. 26 (for quotes), 282; Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (London: British Library, 1997), pp. 86–92 and 179 n39.

¹⁷ A. O. W. Dilke, “Cartography in the Byzantine Empire,” in *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. J. B. Harley and David Woodward, vol. 1, *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), pp. 258–275.

accentuates the juncture with the vertical stem. These elements bring into play not the crucifixion, but the *sign of the cross*, an iconographic distinction on which it is necessary to insist.¹⁸ The image visually identifies Jerusalem *not as a place*, but as a dynamic movement of the cross that spans the world's breadth. The explosive burst of spiritual energy reaches all the way north, while at the south end, a small piece of the band is allotted to Jericho. If Jerusalem is the crossbeam that girds the ecumenical edifice, the tie that binds, it is also the foundation for the blocks of labels above even as it is the horizon for the sectors below.

Seconding the name Jerusalem is the inscription at the joint of the "T," *Mons Syon*. In SJ, the two stacked words fall just below the visible compass hole; in H the composition centers on this landmark. Next to the inscription at right appears a graphic symbol for "mountain," rows of arcs in one, a triangle in the other. The combined verbal and graphic device performs a double role: it designates a particular hill in the Christian topography of Jerusalem, while introducing the primary cognomen for the holy city itself. The treatment of the two names, Jerusalem and Zion, cues a commonly-known etymological gloss, originating in the Latin writings of the Church Fathers, absorbed into Old English homiletics, and widely circulated in any number of exegetical contexts on both sides of the Channel. To put the matter succinctly: as *Hierusalem* means *visio pacis*, so *Sion* means *speculatio*, a beholding from a watchtower or elevated look-out (*specula*).¹⁹ Zion is a figure of speculation, the contemplative ascent whereby the as yet

¹⁸ A corrective to Foys, "An Unfinished *Mappa Mundi*," p. 275.

¹⁹ For a sense of the patristic tradition, see Allan Fitzgerald, *Augustine through the Ages: an Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), pp. 462-463. Augustine reiterates the gloss many times; particularly apt examples include his *Enarrationes in psalmos* 50.22, 64.3, 101.2.4, 134.26; and *De civitate Dei* 17.16. For the Old English tradition, see Paul E. Szarmach, "Visio Pacis: Jerusalem and Its Meanings," *Georgia State Literary Studies* 7, *Typology and English Medieval Literature* (1992), pp. 71-87, esp. 72 and 84 n8. On the importance of the *specula* to the function of the *mappa mundi*, see Patrick Gautier Dalché, "De la glose à la contemplation. Place et fonction de la carte dans les manuscrits du haut moyen âge" in *Testo e immagine nell' alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull' alto medioevo, 41, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 693-771, esp. pp. 753-769, reprinted in *Géographie et culture. La représentation de l'espace du VIe au XII siècle* (Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain: Ashgate, 1997),

embodied soul fixes its gaze far off on the eternal reward, Jerusalem/vision-of-peace, that awaits the blessed at the end time.²⁰ The allegorical senses of Zion and Jerusalem overlap in that both refer to the universal church, the former signifying its earthly existence and the latter its heavenly status, one the church militant, the other the church triumphant.

The ecclesial symbolism of the semantic nexus Zion/Jerusalem finds confirmation in the prominence accorded in the maps to Noah's ark, figure of the church par excellence.²¹ One thread in the rich exegetical fabric woven around the ark seems particularly relevant to the earthly/heavenly distinction triggered by the paired cognomina. For Bede, drawing on Augustine (*Contra Faustum* 12.19) and Isidore (*Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum* 7.21), the ark at rest signifies the "Sabbath rest of the church expectant," the middle phase between its present tribulations and post-*saeculum* peace.²² The ark atop the "mountains of Armenia" means that the church: "not only awaits rest in this life but also acquires eternal rest in the next. And ... having trampled underfoot the peak of earthly ostentation, the church draws near to the soul with heavenly joys even while living in this exile on earth (*Hexaameron* 2.8.4)."²³ Earlier in his

no. VIII; *idem*, "L'héritage antique de la cartographie médiévale," esp. pp. 58-61, and more expansively, *idem*, "Pour une histoire des rapports entre contemplation et cartographie au moyen âge," in *Les méditations cosmographiques à la Renaissance*. Cahiers V. L. Saulnier 26 (Paris: Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2009), pp. 19-40, esp. 19-31. On how the trope "Jerusalem, *visio pacis*/ Zion, *speculatio*" relates *speculatio* to both *specula* and *speculum*, see my forthcoming *From Panoramic Survey to Mirror Reflection: Art and Optics in the Hereford Mappa Mundi*.

²⁰ Jean Leclercq, *Études sur le vocabulaire monastique du moyen âge* (Rome: Herder, 1961), pp. 83-85; Robert Javelet, *Image et ressemblance au 12e siècle, du saint Anselme à Alain de Lille* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1967), 1:376-90 and 2:287-94; O'Reilly, "Bede on Seeing the God of Gods in Zion," esp. pp. 18-29.

²¹ On this topic, see H. S. Benjamins, "Noah, the Ark, and the Flood in Early Christian Theology: The Ship of the Church in the Making," in *Interpretations of the Flood*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and Gerard P. Luttikhuisen (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 134-49; and Jack P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), pp. 101-120, 156-180.

²² Wallis, "Ms Oxford St. John's College 17," pp. 795-796.

²³ Bede, *Hexaameron*, 2.8 lines 1731-35 in the *Library of Latin Texts*, Series A (electronic resource, available by subscription at <http://apps.brepolis.net/BrepolisPortal/default.aspx>; hereafter LLT-A); *On Genesis*, trans. Kendall, p. 192.

commentary on the Flood, Bede offers that mountains submerged in the turbulent waters symbolize “all those who are proud and puff themselves up in the glory of this world (*Hexaemeron* 2.7.18-19).”²⁴ The maps situate *Armenia* and the ark farther to the south than usual, above *Babilonia*. The displacement is productive. It effectively creates new meaning by coupling tropological analogues—Armenia with its mountains, Babylon with its great tower—and eschatological antitheses, the ark of the church vs. its persecutor. The ark, like the cross, is a graphic sign rather than a narrative device. And, as will become increasingly clear, the organizing principle of the image is not geographical, but rhetorical.

Expanding laterally from Zion at the map’s core juncture, Jerusalem embraces the world in the church. But how is the spiritual plenitude of the cross relayed along the east-west axis? This ecclesial concern, I submit, lies behind structural dislocations that distinguish the triplet maps. Uniquely in the Thorney version, the lead inscription couples *Iafeth* with *Sem*. Edson has suggested that the displacement of Japheth from Europe to Asia “could reflect” adherence to the biblical verse Genesis 9.27: “May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Sem, and Chanaan be his servant.”²⁵ Foys nonetheless finds it “puzzling” and “odd” “given the overwhelming cartographic tradition of locating Japheth in Europe.”²⁶ The interpretive difficulty arises, however, because *we* remain fixated on a convention from which the cartographic design intentionally and meaningfully deviates. Edson’s insight applies to more than just the inscription. Noah’s blessing of Japheth, universally understood in Latin exegesis to be a prophecy pertaining

²⁴ Bede *Hexaemeron* 2.7 line 1645 in LLT-A; *On Genesis*, trans. Kendall, p. 189.

²⁵ Edson, *Mapping Time and Space*, p. 89.

²⁶ Foys, “An Unfinished *Mappa Mundi*,” p. 282 and n 47.

to the church, motivates the program as a whole. The absence of Japheth's name from the Worcester and Peterborough versions is a red herring, a point to which I will return.

To the extent that the maps override the tripartite order of the T-O formula, they strengthen the ascendancy of Europe in association with Asia. The upper half of the *orbis terrae*, the more densely packed with inscriptions, comprises not only Asia as usual, but also the eastern portion of Europe (e.g. Athens, Constantinople, Achaia). The spilling over of Europe into Asia—the cartographic expression of Europe's enlargement—quite literally illustrates Genesis 9.27. Straddling both lower sectors, the label *Europa* “rules over” the peoples descended from *Cham* in *Affrica*. This layout turns Africa into a subsection of Europe in conformity with the alternative, bipartite division of lands reported by Orosius (*Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem* 1.2.1).²⁷ Because Africa is set *beneath* Europe, the legends *Terra Iuda* and *Palestina* at right below the arm of the “T” are not relegated to the wrong continent, but belong, like *Mons Syon* and *Iericho*, to the same Holy Land toponymy in which Jerusalem is embedded. The visual and calligraphic hierarchy of the design makes *Europa* the second most important word after Jerusalem (emphatically so in SJ), the former echoing the latter both formally (in SJ, down to the triangular formation of dots at the end of each word) and symbolically.²⁸ By virtue of the position at which *Europa* intersects the T's vertical stem, the label forms the horizontal arm of a proper Latin cross “written” into the earth (in H, the lettering, though not its rectangular framing, maintains the conceit). The visual economy of the image realizes *Europa* as a veritable *crux christi geographica*, claiming the world's western *partes* for the church.

²⁷ von den Brincken, “Gyrus und Spera,” p. 143.

²⁸ Baumgärtner, “Erzählungen kartieren,” pp. 199-200, similarly notes the mirroring of the legends for Jerusalem and Europe in SJ.

The key source for the wording of the maps' lead inscription supplies an exemplary reading of Genesis 9.27. Foys has pointed out that *Quod sunt septuaginta duae gentes ortae* "matches almost precisely text from Isidore's *Chronicon* and his *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*."²⁹ In the *Quaestiones*, Isidore declares that the benediction foretells how "in the people of the nations the church has taken possession of the whole world."³⁰ The gentile progeny of Japheth, Noah's Benjamin, have moved into the domain of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, born of Shem, the eldest; the minor in temporal terms has become the major according to grace. Most importantly, Isidore interprets the blessing by way of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, directly quoting verse 2.19: "you are now no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are citizens with the saints and members of God's household." The maps show the top half of the world to be the home of the apostles, three of whom preach in Greece and one in the Holy Land: Paul at Athens, John at Ephesus, Andrew at Achaia, Peter at Caesarea. To be sure, interest in representing the apostolic mission is an important aspect of the *mappa mundi* tradition since at least the seventh century, as Patrick Gautier Dalché has determined from the lost Iona work.³¹ But the maps under discussion have additional concerns to which they owe their peculiar form and content. They spatialize the ecclesial typology that informed Isidore's recourse to a Pauline

²⁹ Foys, "An Unfinished Mappa Mundi," p. 276 and n. 21

³⁰ Isidore, *Quaestiones* 8.8-10, PL 83, 236A-C: 8. "Et unde hoc factum est, nisi ex benedictione Japheth? in populo enim gentium, totum orbem terrarum occupavit Ecclesia. Hoc praenuntiabatur, cum diceretur: *Dilatet Deus Japheth, et habitet in tabernaculis Sem*. 9. Ecce quomodo dilatatur Deus Japheth, et habitat in tabernaculis Sem, ut Paulus dicit: '*Non estis peregrini et hospites, sed estis cives sanctorum et domestici Dei, aedificati super fundamentum apostolorum et prophetarum* (Ephes. 2.19).' *Benedictus*, inquit, *Deus Sem; sit Chanaan puer illius. Dilatet Deus Japheth, et habitet in tabernaculis Sem*. Hic Sem major natus ipse est, ex quo patriarchae, prophetae, et apostoli generati sunt. 10. Japheth autem gentium est pater, quia etiam *latitudo* interpretatur. Cum ingenti enim multitudine dilatatus est populus ex gentibus, qui cum prophetis et apostolis erat habitaturus. Siquidem et vidimus, juxta Noe patris prophetica benedictionem, in tabernaculo Sem transisse habitationem Japheth, hoc est, in domo legis et prophetarum Ecclesiam potius justificari, minorem quidem tempore, sed gratiae lege majorem."

³¹ Gautier Dalché, "Eucher de Lyon, Iona, Bobbio," pp. 13-14.

hermeneutic. For Augustine (*De civitate Dei* 16.2), Japheth's merger into Shem stands for the union of Greek and Jew, that is, the uncircumcised and the circumcised.

In the triplet maps, the Noachide prophecy unfolds cartographically through Pauline metaphor. Paradigmatic order takes precedence over geographic location, with places layered in delineated horizontal strata. Japheth's presence in Asia increases "latitude" by "latitude," a formal strategy that coincides with the standard Latin etymology of the name Japheth, meaning *latitudo* (breadth, enlargement). Athens and Israelite tribes inhabit the same band above Jerusalem. In the next, the transition to a new spiritual regime occurs, for now Ephesus is paired with Caesarea, where Jesus had proclaimed the Petrine foundation of the church (Matthew 16.18) and where, later, Peter instructed his brethren among the circumcised to perform the first gentile baptisms (Acts 10.44-48). Caesarea, in SJ, falls exactly on longitudinal axis with Mount Zion; thus the historical site where the nascent church initiated its universal mission lines up with the allegorical figure of the same. Finally, the bundling of the Noachide origins of the church into the metaphor of Greek and Jew accounts for the translocation of Achaia, situated in the far southeast corner of *Asia Maior* diagonally across from Athens at north. In the first stratum, Greek Athens, however close to the Holy Land, represents the foreign party who receives God's message originally designated for the children of Israel; in the third, it is from Greek Achaia, however distant, that the good news spreads to the eastern ends of the earth. The younger Japheth has now completely supplanted the elder Shem. The supersessionist argument proceeds through chiasmus.

Geographic subordination to paradigmatic logic is equally evident in the lower half of the *orbis terrae*. The maps combine the eastward dynamic of Japheth's blessing with the westward progress of *translatio imperii*. The legends for the second and third world empires according to

the Orosian series, *Terra Macedonum* and *Cartago*, lie directly across from each other at the cardinal north and south in a temporal stratum between *Babilonia* and *Roma*, the first and fourth, which lie on an east-west diagonal equidistant from the center point. Why the repetition *Kartago Magna* at the extreme west in the place where we might expect Gaul and Spain? Because here the iteration, respecting the design's visual hierarchy, shows vanquished Carthage to be *inferior* to Rome in parallel with Africa's subservience to Europe. Japheth, following the scriptural verse, has both entered into the house of Shem and become, through Rome, the master of Ham.

Says Paul in Ephesians, "you, who were once afar off, have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (2.13). These words, implied by Isidore's reference to the Epistle, are the maps' refrain. As Achaia, so too the British Isles have been radically displaced. Tailed by *Hibernia* and *Thile* (Thule) beyond the outer perimeter of the *orbis terrae*, *Britannia* is pinned to the end of the word *septentrio* in SJ and lined up with it in H. The visual linkage makes explicit Britain's arctic association, a familiar geographical trope.³² Especially striking, however, is the archipelago's *northeastern* position: instead of taking its usual place toward the western *fines*, Britain floats into the Greek sector of Asia (in H, fitting between Jerusalem and Athens). The archipelago's eastward shift neither reflects a shaky grasp of geography, nor is it the result of a confused rendition of some prior model. On the contrary, Britain's re-orientation signals a spiritual reversal of the physical order paralleling, as per Isidore's exegesis, the spiritual upset in the sons' birth order. The dislocation makes a statement about apostolic communion and renewal: through the power of the cross reaching to the farthest north, the farthest west is reborn in Shem's domain a full "citizen with the saints and member of God's household."³³

³² Scully, "Location and Occupation," pp. 245, 253-58, 268.

³³ The coupling of west and north in the world's Christianization is a trope also found in Radulfus Glaber's gloss relating the cardinal directions to Christ's crucifixion: "But here is matter for meditation. We have told how it very

Britain's change of geographical place reflects its people's change of heart. Conversion to Christianity reverses the hardened disposition that follows from the glacial climate of the natural world. Diarmuid Scully's observations on the ways in which Gildas and Bede weave the arctic trope into their histories also pertain to the visual interpretation of the maps. The island experiences a "spiritual melting" as "part of the first warming of the cold gentile world that occurred in the age of the apostles, when Christ's followers began to preach the faith from Jerusalem at the center of the earth to its uttermost periphery."³⁴ To quote from a papal letter that Bede transcribes into his story of Northumbria's conversion, "it has pleased God . . . by the heat of his Holy Spirit wonderfully to kindle the cold hearts also of the nations seated at the extremities of the earth in the knowledge of Himself."³⁵ Given the historical weight of this topos, the correlation in Byrhtferth's Diagram of the cardinal north with the element fire, usually

often happened that the infidels were converted to the faith of Christ in both the northern and western parts of the world, but we do not chance to have heard of the same thing happening in the east and south. This was faithfully foretold in the position of the Lord's cross from which he hung in the place called Calvary. When He was hung from the cross the immature people of the east were hidden behind His head, but the west was open before His eyes, ready to be filled with the light of the faith. So too His almighty right arm, extended for the work of mercy, pointed to the north, which was to be mellowed by the holy word of the faith, while His left was the lot of the south, which swarmed with barbaric peoples. But although we make but brief mention of this sacred portent it remains an inviolable tenet of our catholic faith that, in all places and amongst all peoples without exception, he who is regenerated by baptism and believes in the Almighty Father and His Son Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, the one and only true God, and who performs some good deed through faith, will be acceptable to God, and everyone who persists in this way will live in blessedness the life eternal. Moreover, God knows why it is that men are more able to receive their own salvation in some parts of the world than in others. But we have said this because the Gospel of the Lord Christ, in coming to the regions of these two areas of the world, the north and the west, had laid the best foundations for the holy faith amongst these peoples while on the other hand it has penetrated less in the other two parts, the east and the south, and has left the peoples there trapped for longer in the wilderness of their own errors (*Historiae* 1.24)." *Rodulfi Glabri Historiarum libri quinque*, ed. and trans. John France (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 40-43. I thank Faith Wallis for this reference.

³⁴ Scully, "Location and Occupation," p. 255.

³⁵ "Eius ergo bonitatis misericordia totius creaturae suae dilatandi subdi etiam in extremitate terrae positarum gentium corda frigida sancti Spiritus feruore in sui quoque agnitione mirabiliter est dignata succendere." *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* 2.10. paragraph 3, line 28 in LLT-A. The English translation, which I have only slightly modified, is taken from *Internet History Sourcebooks*, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/bede-book2.asp>, accessed September 15, 2012. The passage is cited and discussed in Scully, "Location and Occupation," p. 256.

assigned to the south, cannot be anything other than deliberate.³⁶ With air at west, rather than at its usual place at east, the seasonal warming of spring and summer is laterally transposed to privilege the northern region inhabited by the archipelago. As Wallis has observed, Byrhtferth's Diagram and map overlap in some details: the two share the ADAM acronym of the Greek words for the cardinal directions; the Diagram in SJ seconds the cartographic reference to Noah, with the name's appearance among the cryptic symbols in the upper band of the inner diamond.³⁷ Diagram and map, it turns out, further have in common the rhetorically strategic use of inversion.

In mapping the Pauline union of the uncircumcised and circumcised, the cartographic images express a sentiment to which Bede gives voice: "the Lord has not summoned the Jews alone, but us too, who are able to cry out to him from the ends of the earth."³⁸ Christian expansion to the "ends of the earth" is a well-known spatial corollary to the culmination of history.³⁹ Bede's exegesis of Genesis 9:26-27 builds on the Augustinian and Isidorian themes already considered. In addition, he takes up the word "tents," the gear of warfare and wandering, to see in Japheth's blessing the earthly peregrination of the gentile faithful who, "placed on the

³⁶ Contra John E. Murdoch, *Album of Science: Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984), p. 365 and Edson, *Mapping Time and Space*, p. 92. Wallis, "Ms Oxford St. John's College 17," p. 798 does not explain the displacement of the elements, but shows how, as a result, the corresponding equinoctial and solstitial coordinates point to the following season, the whole creating a clockwise temporal rotation that repeats the dynamic of the central star-like wheel.

³⁷ Wallis, "Ms Oxford St. John's College 17," p. 801 and *eadem*, "2. Computus Related Materials: 16. Mappamundi, 2. A Crusade era map? Or Byrhtferth's map?" She is currently preparing a new study of the Diagram in which she revisits her earlier thoughts on the symbols (private communication).

³⁸ "non solum iudaeos sed et nos qui de finibus terrae ad eum clamare . . . advocavit." Bede, *Homiliarum evangelii libri ii*. 10, line 222, in LLT-A. The English is cited after O'Reilly, "Islands and Idols at the Ends of the Earth," p. 126 n32. On the map's relationship to Bede's writing, see Lucy E.G. Donkin, "'Usque ad ultimum terrae': Mapping the Ends of the Earth in Two Medieval Floor Mosaics," in *Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, pp. 189-217, esp. 196-198.

³⁹ Scully, "Location and Occupation," p. 248, with further bibliography.

road of this life, sigh for the heavenly fatherland.”⁴⁰ The maps orient their readers, proleptically, to the eternal peace of the New Jerusalem, yet not without recalling the prior ordeal of Judgment to which the earth will be subjected. God once destroyed the world through the waters of the Flood; a second judgment will come through fire (*Hexaameron* 2.8.22, 2.9.11-15).⁴¹ Just as Noah’s ark brings to mind the element of water, so the prominent *mons Ethna* does for that of fire. Although parallel signs with respect to the physical world, the ark and Mount Etna are contrary eschatological symbols. Whereas the ark exemplifies salvation through the church, the restive volcano exemplifies just the opposite—according to Isidore, Gehenna, whose perpetual fires torment the bodies of the damned unto eternity.⁴²

I mentioned above that Japheth’s name appears only in SJ’s version of the map. Foys may well be right that the prototype lacked the name, and that the Thorney scribe added it in the process of creating an artistically more accomplished version.⁴³ Even so, the scribe’s intervention

⁴⁰ Bede, *Hexaameron* 2, lines 2346-69 in LLT-A: “dixit que, benedictus dominus deus sem; sit chanaan seruus eius. Diximus in sem primogenito filio noe primitiuam ecclesiam, quae ex israhelitico populo collecta est, in iapheth minimo filio electionem gentium quae secuta est esse designatam. Vnde et recte dicitur, benedictus dominus deus sem. Quamquam enim sit deus omnium gentium, quodammodo tamen proprio uocabulo et in ipsis iam gentibus dicitur deus israel; et unde hoc factum est, nisi ex benedictione iapheth? in populo enim gentium orbem terrarum occupauit ecclesia. Hoc prorsus praenuntiabatur cum dicitur subsequenter. Dilatet deus iapheth, et habitet in tabernaculis sem. In tabernaculis quippe sem habitet iapheth quia in fide patriarcharum et prophetarum - in scripturis prophetis, in sacramentis legalibus spiritaliter intellectis - peregrinatur ecclesia in terris. Tabernaculis namque in bello uel itinere uti solemus, et in tabernaculis israhelitici populi nos, qui de gentibus ad christum uenimus, habitamus, quia nimirum quamdiu in huius uitae uia positi celestem patriam suspiramus, quamdiu contra insidias antiqui hostis, christo duce atque adiutore, certamus, necesse est ut semper antiquorum patrum dicta pariter et facta et opera in exemplum uitae et professionis teneamus.; Quatenus horum auctoritate protecti, certius ac securius ad palmam remunerationis perfecto agone tendamus. Congruit autem profectibus sanctae ecclesiae, quibus orbem impleuit totum, etiam nomen iapheth, quod ‘latitudo’ dicitur; unde alludens ad nomen ipsum, dicit noe, dilatet deus iapheth, id est latitudinem.” *On Genesis*, trans. Kendall, pp. 211-213.

⁴¹ Bede, *Hexaameron* 2.8 lines 2062-69 and 2.9 lines 2207-50 in LLT-A; *On Genesis*, trans. Kendall, p. 203, 207-208; Wallis, “Ms Oxford St. John’s College 17,” p. 791.

⁴² Isidore, *De natura rerum* 47 (De monte Aetna).4: “Constat autem ad exemplum gehennae, cujus ignis perpetua incendia spirabunt ad puniendos peccatores, qui cruciabuntur in saecula saeculorum. Nam sicut isti montes in tanta temporis diuturnitate usque nunc flammis aestuantibus perseverant, ita ut nunquam exstingui possint, sic ignis ille ad crucianda corpora damnatorum finem nunquam est habiturus.” Jacques Fontaine, ed. and trans., *Traité de la nature* (Bordeaux: Féret, 1960), pp. 322-335.

⁴³ Foys, “An Unfinished *Mappa Mundi*,” p. 282.

should be considered less a revision that alters the map's original purpose than a clarification of an aspect integral to the cartographic image. Medieval readers of H, and by extension C, would hardly need Japheth's name written out in order to supply the final term of the Noachide triad, an automatic mental act. Diametrically opposed in the two complete maps, the inscriptions *De sem gentes xxvii* and *De cham gentes xxx* relegate the descendants of the first and second sons to comparatively small sectors at top and bottom; by contrast, the "house" of Japheth ever increases to fill the expanse between. In fact, one could argue that the absence of the third name amounts to a refusal to pin down an ongoing movement, a diffusion that exceeds geographical bounds and ends only by overtaking the world. With the words *De iafeth*, the Thorney scribe makes explicit the youngest son's rightful place in the eldest's domain. Still, the formulation does not enumerate peoples, so can be read as a spatial reference to the universalizing mission of the gentile church. Wallis points to elements similarly unique to SJ, notably in its version of Byrhtferth's Diagram (the band of symbols in the inner diamond), which may represent initiatives or "refinements" on the part of Thorney scribes.⁴⁴

Wallis and Foys have eloquently written about the maps' purpose to demonstrate the interconnection between center and periphery, specifically the English periphery, within a unified *orbis christianus*. In crediting the maps with a rhetorical purpose, I have only fleshed out the interpretive consensus. The new finding to emerge from my analysis is the significance of Japheth's blessing, which extends beyond the triplet maps.

The spatialization of Genesis 9.27 takes a pictorial turn in an unfinished map in a *computus* manuscript made for William of Malmesbury c. 1120-before 1125 (Oxford, Bodleian,

⁴⁴ Wallis, "Ms Oxford St. John's College 17," p. 792.

MS Auct. F. 3. 14, fol. 19v).⁴⁵ Isidore's *De natura rerum* here concludes with a T-O map in which roundels form part of the diagrammatic armature. **(Figure 4)** The design is a variant of a rare type found, to my knowledge, only in manuscripts that belong to an Anglo-Saxon edition of the text. The earliest analogue (Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS 3507, fol. 97v) dates from *c.* 960–

⁴⁵ Otto Pächt and J. J. G. Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, 3 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966-73), 3:11 no. 89; Rodney M. Thomson, "The 'Scriptorium' of William of Malmesbury" in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts & Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, eds. Malcolm B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scholar Press, 1978), pp. 117-142, esp. 126-130, 132; Rodney M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, revised edition (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2003), pp. 83-85.

80 (Figure 5); a second appears in a much later Salisbury manuscript (second half of the

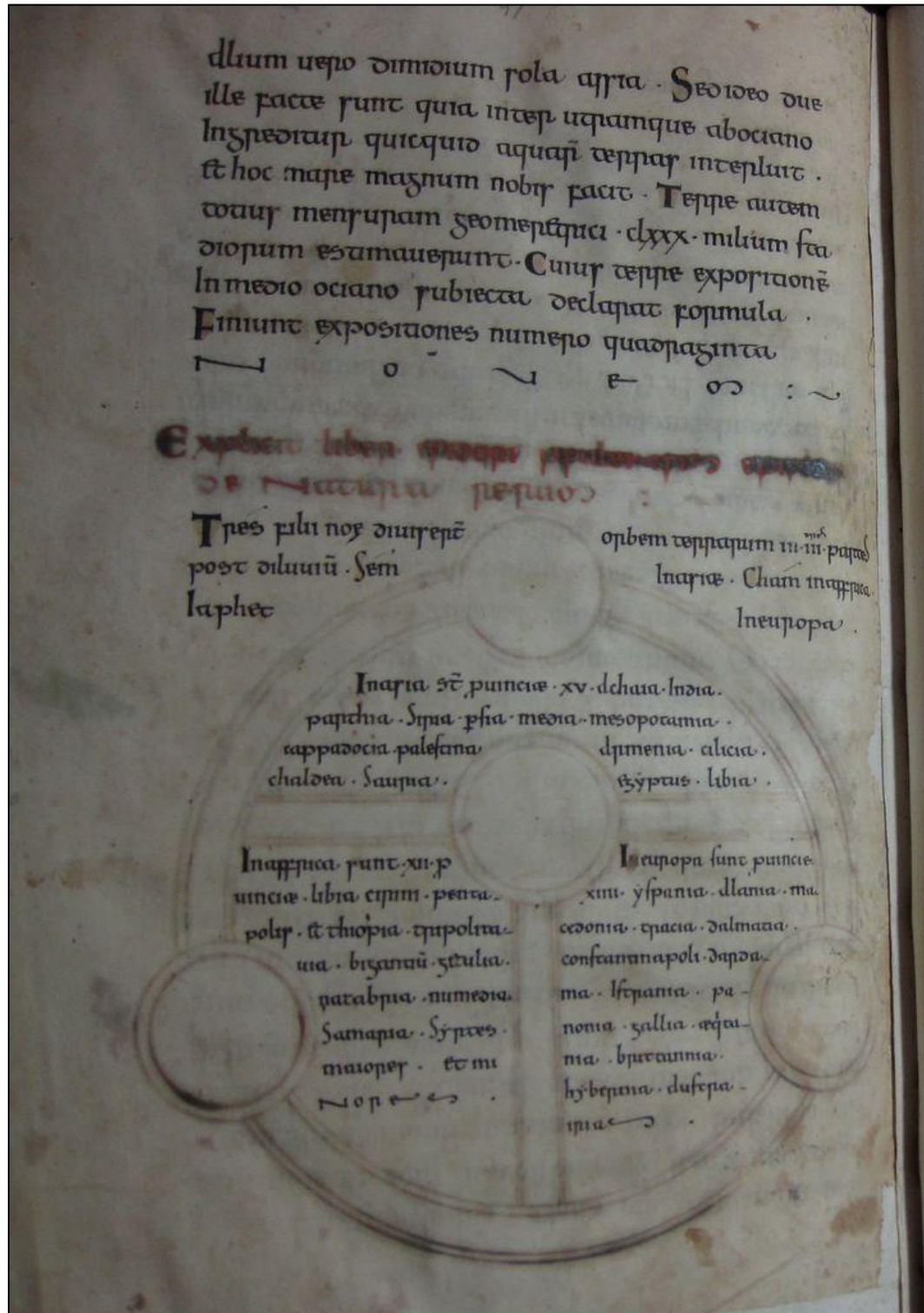


Figure 5 *Mappa mundi* concluding Isidore's *De natura rerum* in a *Computus* compilation, c. 960–80. Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS 3507, fo. 97v. Photo: author.

eleventh century) copied from a common exemplar (London, BL, Cotton MS Vitellius A. xii, fols. 63v–64r).⁴⁶ The sister list-maps, the provinces of the tripartite world, follow an interpolated note: *Tres filii noe diviserunt orbem terrarum in tres partes post diluvium. Sem in Asia. Cham in Affrica. Iaphet in Europa.*⁴⁷ This pair of Isidore maps have attracted attention on account of their transposition of Europe and Africa, for which ingenious explanations have been advanced.⁴⁸ A simple rationale, however, should not be overlooked. What appears to us a lateral reversal of the geographic order is merely an effect of our taking the maps out of their material context in the book. In fact, the cartographic content perfectly corresponds to the *writing/reading order* of the introductory inscription naming the sons according to their *birth order*: Asia occupies the maps' top sector as usual (top=first), while Africa and Europe, assigned to the second and third sons, occupy the left and right sectors respectively. As with the triplet maps in SJ, H and C, geography per se is not an absolute value; rather the spatialization of toponymic lists privileges rhetorical values. In the Exeter map, the active distribution of lands (*diviserunt*) aligns with the chronology of filial descent. Parallel temporal modalities—Noachide propagation and textual processing—govern the visual disposition of the image. Because the Malmesbury map, without caption, was abandoned before the scribe tackled the list, the would-be disposition of the two western sectors remains indeterminate.

⁴⁶ The Vitellius map is reproduced in Edson, *Mapping Space and Time*, p. 6, fig. 1.3. See N. R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 813-814. This particular edition of the DNR is discussed by Wesley M. Stevens, "Sidereal Time in Anglo-Saxon England" in *Voyage to the Other World: the Legacy of Sutton Hoo*, eds. Calvin B. Kendall and Peter S. Wells (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1992), pp. 125-154, esp. 136-137. A third copy of the DNR that belongs to the same textual recension but features a map of the traditional T-O design is found in London, BL, Cotton MS Domitian I (mid-tenth century). Conversely, the Malmesbury text of the DNR has not, so far as I am aware, been identified as a member of the group.

⁴⁷ On the textual source of the inscription, see Van Duzer and Sáenz-López Pérez, "*Tres filii Noe*," pp. 28-30.

⁴⁸ Wesley M. Stevens, "The Figure of the Earth in Isidore's *De natura rerum*," *Isis* 71/ 2 (1980), pp. 268-277, esp. 274-277; Mittman, *Maps and Monsters*, pp. 21-23. I will consider these Isidore maps, along with Stevens's and Mittman's ideas about them, in my forthcoming book mentioned in n. 19 above.

Uniquely, the Malmesbury map turns the medallions into *clipei* for half-figures, left in the state of leadpoint underdrawings. The top roundel at the cardinal east clearly portrays the figure of Christ in Majesty. The central medallion at the crux of the “T” contains a female figure; like the Majesty directly above, she is shown frontally, her arms raised in the *orans* pose. The outer medallions, placed at the cardinal north and south, but lower than the central one, enclose identical male figures in lay garb; they are turned toward the central figure, looking up at her with arms raised in acclamation. Wallis has identified these “praying” figures as “standing in for the three continents.”⁴⁹ But why would only one continent take the form of a female personification even as the draftsman insisted on twinning the lateral pair? How to explain the privileged status accorded the female bust, a compositional strategy reinforced by the deferential attitudes of the facing males? An alternative identification better fits the iconography: the cartographic framework must present Shem and Japheth, types of the two branches, circumcised and uncircumcised, that unite in the one church, *Eccllesia* personified.

Might the iconographic transformation of this Isidore map be brought to bear on the unfinished version of the map in C? Remarking on two empty drypointed roundels that intersect the top left and right of the main circle, Foys wisely admits that “the intended content . . . remains a mystery.” Nevertheless, he goes on to say, “Possibilities for content range widely, from the sun and the moon in a computistical context to any of a number of Old and New Testament figures in a scriptural mode.”⁵⁰ Shem and Japheth, I venture to speculate, might make good candidates.

⁴⁹ Wallis, “2. Computus Related Materials: 20. Byrhtferth’s Diagram, 2, Byrhtferth’s Diagram as symbolic diagram” in *The Calendar & the Cloister*, <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/ms-17>. Van Duzer and Sáenz-López Pérez, “*Tres filii Noe*,” p. 30 identifies the three praying figures as Noah’s sons, which clearly cannot be the case.

⁵⁰ Foys, “An Unfinished *Mappa Mundi*,” p. 274 n. 12.

Deciphering the triplet *mappae mundi* raises questions about the nature of their form. If we are correct to call these images maps—and we are—how do they work cartographically and, given the subservience of geographical order to hermeneutics, what is it that they map? We can use the maps' material context in SJ and H to help sort out their distinctive visual status on the one hand and integrated functionality on the other.⁵¹ The immediately proximate materials—astronomical *rotae*, alphabet and calendrical tables, diagrams pertaining to kinship, types of knowledge, and macro-/microcosmic linkage—graphically process intangibles through color-coded geometric (including columnar) grids whose formal relationship to content is purely arbitrary. By contrast, the maps correspond to a physical entity, the *orbis terrarum*, from which they extrapolate their overall representational structure however conventionalized and abstract. But such iconicity only goes so far. The tables and diagrams spatialize concepts and the maps conceptualize space according to common principles. The maps share, with the surrounding tables and diagrams, an approach to the generation of thought: verbal signs create meaning associatively by virtue of juxtaposition, parallelism and opposition. Inscriptions perform the cartographic task of mapping Britain into an exegetical legacy, a spiritual patrimony that establishes the island's claim to a place in the unfolding telos of election and salvation.

⁵¹ For example, in SJ (see <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/ms-17/index.htm>): alphabet table and astronomical schema (fol. 5v), map and feria table (fol. 6r), degrees of consanguinity (fol. 6v), taxonomy of knowledge (fol. 7r) and Byrhtferth's Diagram (fol. 7v). In H (see <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts>): taxonomy of knowledge (fol. 6v), diagram of Creation (fol. 7v), Byrhtferth's Diagram (fol. 8r), map (fol. 8v).